

Tale *Feathers*

December -
January
2006-2007

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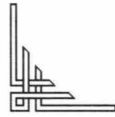
Join the Flock! *Holiday Open House* Sunday, December 3, 2006 Tyson Research Center

Once again this year, the St. Louis Audubon Society will be joining the Webster Groves Nature Study Society to celebrate the holidays, this year at Tyson Research Center in the Headquarters Office Classroom. This special event will be held on Sunday, December 3 from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

Please bring an appetizer, dessert or casserole to share.
Beverages will be provided.

While enjoying the holiday atmosphere and refreshments, you can listen to the special holiday music provided by the Tyson Valley Ramblers, have a chance to win some great attendance prizes, and bid on silent auction items of interest to nature lovers.
We hope to see you there!

Directions to Tyson Research Center:
From the junction of I-44 and I-270, go west on I-44 about 7 miles to the Antire Rd/Beaumont exit (exit #269). The entrance gate to Tyson is about 100 yards past the exit ramp stop sign on the right (north side of I-44). At the entry gate or Gatehouse please sign in or check in with the Gate Attendant, and then proceed down the road to the Tyson Headquarters Office for the party.



St. Louis Audubon Society

Opportunities and Announcements

Mission Statement Of

The St. Louis
Audubon Society

Help our community
sustain biological
Diversity through
Nature.

Goals

To foster an aware-
ness and under-
standing
Of birds and other
wildlife and their
habitats

To educate our com-
munity so people
can make
informed decisions
about the natural
world.

Volunteer Hosts Needed at Two Rivers Refuge

Audubon members and friends might enjoy hosting at the refuge headquarters- visitors' center, located near Brussels, in Calhoun County, IL. This contribution helps the public learn more about their local wildlife refuge and how to enjoy it. Volunteer hosts spend a few hours there on a Saturday or a Sunday. They greet visitors who come by for information or the chance to look around. There are hiking trails, a wildlife observation blind, and restored prairie units close by the center. The location gives a good view of Swan Lake, plus close looks at ponds with waterfowl. Massive flocks of snow geese and white pelicans are present in season, along with Bald Eagles.

Managers of the Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge explain that the pool of volunteers who keep the center open on weekends needs expanding. Most visitors prefer to come during fall and winter months. Since many come from the St. Louis area, it would help to get more St. Louis area volunteers.

Host volunteers must sign up for specific dates and are provided a key, used to open the center. They may also have a prior orientation meeting. One or two volunteers can serve at one time, which might be morning or afternoon hours. The center closes by 4:00 p.m. Visitors sign the guest register and may take free literature, such as maps and bird checklists. To sign up or ask for information (Speak to Curt McMurl, Assistant Manager), call the Refuge headquarters on weekdays at 618/883-2524.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

(Adults) The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual event that engages people who enjoy birds in counting birds and reporting their results to reveal the numbers, kinds, and distribution of birds across the continent. Scientists then analyze the results and post summaries highlighting the year's trends and findings. Join representatives from the St. Louis Audubon Society and the Missouri Department of Conservation in this program designed to teach basic bird identification and show how you can participate in this exciting citizen-science opportunity.

The program will be held at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center.
**For Reservations call 314-301-1500. Reservations begin January 2.
Saturday, January 20, 2006 10:00a.m. - Noon**

The Great Backyard Bird Count is promoted every year by Cornell University to get everyone nationwide to assist in doing a bird count. Whether you are a regular birder or just a casual watcher doesn't matter. If you have a computer, an area where you can see birds, (your backyard, a park or even your subdivision), you can join in and help. No special equipment is needed and you can do it in any location within a one mile radius of the area you choose. There is a special section listed on Cornell University's website just for this program. The count is always held for three days only in February each year. If you have never done this and are interested in learning how it works, then join us at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center on January 20 for a couple of hours to learn more.

Birding Trips: December, January, & February

John Solodar

December 16, Saturday Riverlands Note 9:00 AM start. Mike Thelen will lead this trip. This is the time of the year when a lot of errant migrants make their appearance and Riverlands is a good spot for them. Bring lots of warm clothes as the winter wind can be quite stressful at RMBS. (RMBS is the now abbreviation for Riverlands which is now known as Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary.) We'll be looking for odd gulls, lots of ducks and maybe some surprises such as scoters and Jaegers.

January 13, Saturday Riverlands - RMBS is our winter hotspot for interesting birds as it is the time of year when the really rare gulls often show up. With luck we will also have some Longspurs and Snow Buntings around. Again, dress warmly against the winter winds at RMBS. Some of those hunter's charcoal/iron filings hand warmers will also serve you well. Paul Bauer will lead the trip for the experienced birders starting at 9:00 AM. Mike Thelen will lead beginning birders on their own, separate, trip also starting from Teal Pond and at the same time.

January 24, Wednesday Riverlands This is our second weekday trip for the birding season. All the conditions for the January 13 trip apply for this date as well. One advantage of being there on a weekday is that the inside bathrooms at the Corps headquarters will be open. As currently scheduled, the group will gather at 9:00 AM at Teal Pond and self organize with no pre-assigned leader. However, the coordinator will try to get a leader there anyway. The trip is planned for one-half day.

Feb 3, Saturday Riverlands Special start time for this trip is 1:00 PM. This will give ample opportunity late in the afternoon to look for Short-eared Owls and to check the gull roost for rarities. Connie Alwood and Josh Uffman will co-lead this trip.

Feb 17, Saturday Baldwin Lake/Peabody Coal Strip Mines This trip has been very productive in the past. It's in Illinois and starts at Baldwin Lake which is southwest of St. Louis. We often have Loggerhead Shrikes and Short-eared Owls as well as thousands of Snow Geese with Ross' Geese tossed in for good measure.

Lots of other good birds are usually seen as well. Torrey Berger is scheduled to be the leader unless he goes overseas in which case we'll get someone else to lead the trip. Meet as described below at 9:00 AM at Baldwin Lake and plan for an all day trip although it will be easy to leave part way through if that is necessary.

How to get there

Riverlands - Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. The designation changes to Hwy 67 just beyond the 4th traffic light, but continue. Turn right on last road just before the Clark Bridge at the Mississippi River. (Fisca gas station at this turn and also a sign for Jones Confluence Park.) Turn right on the first road and park in the Teal Pond parking lot.

Baldwin Lake. Take I-270 across from Jefferson Barracks Bridge to IL. Take Hwy 3 south to Redbud. Go east on Hwy 154 to Baldwin, IL. Follow signs in town to Lake Baldwin. Meet in parking lot inside gate. The group will caravan to the Peabody Coal Strip Mines area.



USFWS Urban Bird Conservation Treaty Program Update

Sue Gustafson

The St. Louis Urban Bird Conservation Treaty Program, a Cooperative Agreement program between the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) and St. Louis Audubon Society, provided funding for habitat restoration at four more area parklands recently. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) provided a portion of the program funding that made possible the three projects at St. Louis County parks.

At **West Tyson County Park**, a former agriculture field in the Meramec River floodplain had gone fallow. Late last winter, a prescribed burn was done, and in March, fifteen acres of prairie were planted. The program funded the purchase of 45 pounds of Big Bluestem, 45 pounds of Indian grass, 47 pounds of native Missouri wildflower mix, 15 pounds of Illinois Bundle Flower, and 30 pounds of Partridge Pea.

At **Lower Meramec County Park**, a former agriculture field that had gone fallow for two seasons was disked, herbicided, and prepped for planting in early April. Several weeks later, ten acres of prairie was planted. The program funded the purchase of 35 pounds of native Missouri wildflower mix, five pounds of Illinois Bundle Flower, and 15 pounds of Partridge Pea.

At **Hunter's Ford County Park** along the Meramec River (a park not yet open to the public), a significant layer of sand has been deposited over the years which has produced a unique sand prairie habitat with such species as Big Bluestem, Golden Aster, and Prickly Pear Cactus. The area in need of restoration was heavily infested with fescue. In January, woody vegetation was selectively removed and the area was burned. In February, ten acres of prairie was inter-seeded. The program provided funding for ten pounds of Big Bluestem, ten pounds of Little Bluestem, ten pounds of Side Oats Grama, and 35 pounds of native wildflower seed mix. Seed for these three projects was purchased from Frank and Judy Oberle's Pure Air Native Seed Company in Novinger, Mo. (The remaining portion of the funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation was slated for marsh expansion at

Creve Coeur County Park; the Park has entered into an arrangement with the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service which will take implementation of the expansion past the current FWS program deadline, therefore, the remaining NFWF funding will focus on establishing five acres of mesic woodland on the west perimeter of the park to provide screening and a wildlife corridor, and twenty acres of upland prairie as a transition between the marsh and mesic woodland.)

The fourth habitat restoration project completed recently was the planting of woodland plants in Kennedy Woods in **Forest Park** in and around the former Valley Drive roadbed. The re-vegetation will assist in decreasing the fragmentation caused by the former road. At the annual volunteer Honeysuckle Removal Workday held on November 11, volunteers also assisted in digging holes for the planting of a portion of the plants which included such species as Blue Wild Indigo, Meadow Phlox, Woodland Goldenrod, Woodland Spiderwort, Golden Seal, and Bluebells. The plants were purchased from Missouri Wildflowers Nursery in Jefferson City, Mo. St. Louis Audubon has enjoyed working with **Dennis Hogan** of St. Louis County Parks and **Steve Buback** of Forest Park Forever in implementing these habitat restoration projects that will be of benefit to birds and other wildlife.



Doug "Bull" Durham of Audubon & Bill Reininger of Forest Park Forever at Forest Park Work Day.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Torrey Berger

Two new programs, which resulted from our membership survey last year, are the mid-week field trips and field trips for beginners only. The first mid-week trip was held last month and the even dozen participants had a great birding day, despite harsh weather. The first "beginners only" group will have had their first trip by the time you read this message. It appears that both programs are worthwhile additions. Keep an eye out in future newsletters for dates for both programs.

St. Louis Audubon will be participating in the 2nd Annual Backyard Birding Festival at the Missouri Botanical Garden, and the Eagle Days Program on the Chain of Rocks Bridge. (See elsewhere in this *Tail Feathers* for more information.)

Finally, we hope to see many of you at our annual Christmas Party, held jointly with Webster Groves Nature Study Society. This year's party will be held at Tyson Research Center and will include bluegrass music provided by the Center's own musical group. More details are included in this issue of *Tail Feathers*.

Seasons Greetings to all and hope to see many of you at our exciting programs during 2007.



St. Louis Audubon Society will have a warming tent on the Bridge. Volunteers will be presenting: "Getting Started Birding: from 9:00 to 9:30 am. See you at Eagle Days on the Chain of Rocks Bridge!"

Eagle Days at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge

January 13 & 14, 2007, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

The twelfth annual Eagle Days at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge will be held Saturday and Sunday, January 13 & 14. To accommodate more visitors the eagle education program will be repeated every 20 minutes, 10:00 am – 2:40 pm. "We can accommodate 50% more visitors in the program tent by offering three programs per hour and we are also going to try a different set up this year to get visitors in and out of the program tent more efficiently," said Kathi Weilbacher, Program Manager. "At the Illinois Bridge entrance we will have an education display by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). No matter where visitors enter the Bridge there will be interactive displays and exhibits."

From the Bridge, viewing scopes will be set up to spot eagles fishing, riding ice floes, soaring overhead or roosting in nearby trees. The program will also showcase Lewis & Clark re-enactors, who will have a camp set up reminiscent of the 1804 – 1806 Corps of Discovery to give visitors a glimpse of life during the explorers' time.

Free shuttles will operate from two locations in Missouri, the Missouri Welcome Center (Riverview Drive and I-270) and at North Riverfront Park (Riverview Drive south of the water treatment plant). In Illinois, newly expanded free parking is available at the Bridge entrance. Visitors may also park at the Missouri entrance to the Bridge for a fee of \$5; handicapped visitors may park in this lot free of charge.

We wish to thank the following for their generous support, permitting us to keep this program free of charge:

The Dana Brown Foundation
The Great Rivers Greenway District
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Metro-East Park and Recreation District
Missouri Department of Conservation
Southwest Bank
Wild Birds Unlimited

Christmas Bird Counts 2006-2007

Put your birding skills to great use by participating in one or more of the area Christmas Bird Counts. Here is a listing of several counts that St. Louis birders participate in. For a complete listing of counts around the state, please visit the Audubon Society of Missouri website at www.mobirds.org/CBC/CBCSchedule.asp. For most counts, there is a participation fee of \$5.00 per person. This fee is forwarded to American Birds to help cover the CBC expenses and cost of publishing the Count issue.

Big Oak Tree SP 12/15/2006 We will meet on Count Day at 6:00 a.m. at Wally's Chew-Chew Restaurant, which is located on the southeast corner of the interchange at the Charleston exit off I-57 (right next to Boomland—it REALLY is open this year). After breakfast, briefing and assignments, teams will begin counting by 7:00 a.m. We will rendezvous at noon at the picnic area at Big Oak to plan strategy for the afternoon. The participation fee of \$5.00 per person will be collected at the time of sign-up on Count Day. Bill Eddleman
eddllemanw@sbcglobal.net
(573) 335-1507

Clarence Cannon NWR 12/28/2006 Lincoln County. Contact compiler for the details. Scott Schuette
sschuette01@hotmail.com
636-795-9215

Meramec Springs 12/16/2006 Contact Linda Frederick lfredrck@rollanet.org or Rod Lentz lentz@umr.edu Linda Frederick
lfredrck@rollanet.org
(573) 368-3504

Mingo NWR 12/18/2006 We will meet on Count Day at 6:00 a.m. at Mel's Diner, which is located at 251 East Richardson Street in Puxico, a couple of blocks east of the yellow flashing light on Highway 51. After breakfast, briefing and assignments, teams will begin counting by 7:00 a.m. and will report back to the restaurant at the end of the County Day (approximately 5:00 p.m.). The participation fee will be collected at the time of sign-up on Count Day. Bill Eddleman
eddllemanw@sbcglobal.net
(573) 335-1507

Orchard Farm 1/1/2007 St. Charles County. Contact Compiler. Randy Korotev
korotev@wustl.edu
(314) 993-0055



Arctic Wildlands and You
A National Audubon Presentation
January 16th, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.

Please join us at the **Creve Coeur Government Center** for this exciting presentation and discussion from Taldi Walter, Alaska Field Coordinator in the Public Policy Office at National Audubon. Alaska encompasses more than 600,000 square miles of rugged mountains, grinding glaciers, endless tundra, diverse temperate rainforest and winding coast lines. Its birdlife diversity alone is astounding—ranging from the Spectacled Eider and Yellow-billed Loon in the Arctic to the Black Oystercatcher and the Marbled Godwit along the southern coastline. The beauty and splendor of our largest state will be showcased with special highlights on the Tongass National Forest—our largest national forest at 17 million acres with some of the finest old growth temperate rain forest, Teshekpuk Lake—an amazing wetland wilderness on the North Shore providing critical waterfowl breeding habitat, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—one of the nation's largest refuges and one of the few remaining unprotected from industrial exploitation.

Taldi will also be prepared to discuss conservation policy opportunities that await the 110th Congress as they begin their work in January. This will include such far-reaching issues as energy conservation and global warming as well as more local issues involving the Mississippi River and exotic, damaging organisms like Zebra mussels.

From I-270 and Ladue, go east on Ladue, left at the light at New Ballas, go ¼ mile north to the Creve Coeur Government Center at 300 N. New Ballas. The Community Center is in the northwest corner of the lower level (closest to Olive and Ballas).

Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2,200 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Mary Dueren edits the newsletter. To contact the editor, call evenings to 314-576-1473 or email: mdueren@charter.net.

St. Louis Audubon Society **2006 - 2007**

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St. Louis Audubon Society Chapter Only Membership Application

Note: To receive the National Audubon Magazine, contact the National Audubon Society for an additional application.

Your membership dues will go directly to the St. Louis Audubon Society. Your membership dues support local issues that are important to you, programs at our general meetings, and *Tale Feathers*, our newsletter.

Dues are \$15.00 per year and cover all members living at the same address.

Please complete the form, enclose a check payable to SLAS, and mail to:

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